

Ethnic minority media: Between hegemony and resistance

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Abstract

Traditionally outside the mainstream, ethnic minorities have been active in developing their own media outlets throughout the world. Introducing ethnic minorities in the public sphere – where social and political issues are articulated and negotiated, and struggles over hegemonic meanings take place – these media have become empowering tools to struggle against cultural hegemony, exclusion and discrimination. In this regard, the potential of ethnic minority media as platforms for the expression, discussion and exchange of generally marginalised collectives must be recognised. However, a more thorough analysis of minority media compels us to be prudent, as also in this specific field there are tensions and contradictions arising from the multiple forces that influence media production, which can limit their counterhegemonic potential. This article invites scholars to analyse ethnic minority media in a critical way, highlighting both resistance to hegemonic discourses and the limits imposed by political and economic forces, as complexity is an inherent characteristic of the media field.

Keywords

Ethnic media, minority media, cultural hegemony, alternative media, mainstream media

Introduction

The title of this special issue invites readers to reflect on situations of dominance and oppression in contemporary societies, where the growing ethnic and cultural diversity – intrinsic to the process of creation of some countries, such as the United States, Canada and Australia – is still perceived as a threat to a purportedly homogeneous national identity, as if such a thing were possible.¹ Ethnic and cultural diversity in contemporary societies may be the result of colonialism, conquest and migration, be it voluntary or forced. Traditionally states have made efforts to either erase that diversity (through assimilationist acculturative practices), or to maintain such diverse groups in a subaltern position. In that regard, the concept of cultural hegemony coined by Gramsci (1992) becomes useful to understand the role of institutions, such as the media, in the maintenance of a system of domination. But where a situation of oppression exists, also emancipatory practices arise, and as Gross (2001) states, what better way to counteract media bias and homogenising practices and discourses than to create your own media to speak by

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yourself. For other authors, media production by ethnic minorities has become an 'imperative' to avoid cultural loss in multicultural societies:

What better strategy could there be for ensuring minority survival than the development by minorities of their own media conveying their own point of view in their own language? In this manner, steps can be taken to guarantee that cultural traditions are not reduced to the level of folklore and that languages evolve in a manner adaptative to the requirements of modern societies. This might be referred to as the media imperative of modern life, a fact recognized by minorities throughout the world who have lobbied for greater access to the means of media production (Riggins 1992: 3, emphasis in the original).

Even though there is no internationally agreed definition of what constitutes indigenous peoples or ethnic minorities, we will follow the United Nations (UN) proposal to refer to ethnic or racial groups in a given country in which they are in a non-dominant position vis-à-vis the dominant ethnic population: they are numerically smaller than the rest of the population, not in a dominant position, have a culture, language, religion or race that is distinct from that of the majority, and their members have a will to preserve those characteristics. These groups are much more likely to face disadvantages in the labour market, are generally worse off in terms of education and health than the ethnic majority, and most of the risks they face are driven by three main factors: spatial disadvantages, culture and language, and prejudice and discrimination (UN, 2018: 98-99). A report from the University of Maryland (2015, in UN, 2018: 100) states that, in 2006, 196 ethnic or religious minorities in 108 countries faced some type of formal legal discrimination. This may include formal barriers to citizenship, voting rights and access to justice.

The UN definition of ethnic minorities includes indigenous peoples, who despite being the first inhabitants of a territory, became minorities as a result of the settlement and colonisation of their native territories by other peoples. Ethnic minorities also include those born abroad. In this category we must include both voluntary and forced migration processes. The latest estimate is that there were around 244 million international migrants in the world in 2015, around 3.3 per cent of the global population, even though the great majority do not migrate across borders but within countries. However, the increase has been made evident both numerically and proportionally, and it is projected to reach 405 million by 2050 (IOM, 2018). A recent report by the International Organization of Migration (IOM) also reflects a significant increase in displacement due to civil and transnational conflicts. Latest estimations indicate there were 40.3 million internally displaced persons and 22.5 million refugees² in 2016 (IOM, 2018).

A decade ago, IOM warned how 'in spite of the revolution in communications, there are many people who have inadequate information on the magnitude, the implications and the socioeconomic context of migration' (IOM, 2011: 8). Immigration has become a highly politicised issue and has been perceived in a negative way, despite the intrinsic necessities of the capitalist production mode. As this report points out, increases in migration flows or the extent to which perceived migration levels are considered to exceed 'acceptable levels' often have a negative impact on public opinion. In this regard, migrants are usually accused of stealing the natives' jobs, of causing the collapse of the welfare state, and of the economy decline in general. Paradoxically and, in contrast to popular perceptions and public discourse on immigration as having negative effects for receiving countries, a recent study from the Organisation for the Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) found that the net fiscal effects of immigration, i.e. the taxes migrants pay minus the benefits and government services they receive, tend to be quite small and -for most OECD countries analysed in the study- positive (OECD, 2014, in IOM, 2018: 4). Some also attribute growing public anxiety and negativity about migration not only to migrant flow increases but also to the pace at which they occur (IOM, 2011).

More recently, the economic recession and the so called 'refugee crisis' have brought new

wings to xenophobic political parties around the world. In Europe, the Italian government has tightened up border control in its determination to expel immigrants. This has been celebrated by right wing groups in Spain, especially since the arrival of a new party to the Andalusian Parliament (Vox), and its proposal for expelling nearly 52,000 immigrants from the region.³ In the United States, the debate around migration has intensified since the banning of foreign nationals from seven predominantly Muslim countries, the Central American caravans and the current administration's hardline stance on the so called 'immigration crisis', including the President's push to build a wall along the US-Mexico border. Mediatisation of these debates, together with the hardening of border control through detention and expulsion policies, put migrants on the front page of public opinion as a problem to be solved. While mainstream media tend to mainly report migrants as illegal, criminals, or as victims or threat (Benson, 2013; Retis, 2012, 2016; Santa Ana, 2002), they are rarely covered as the solution to crucial issues such as retirement pensions, rural depopulation, low birth rates, or lack of labour force in some economic sectors. This way, by focusing on security and public order issues, mainstream media keep contributing to the construction of migration as a 'moral panic' (Cohen, 1972), playing an important role in the maintenance of a hegemonic system which relegates ethnic and migrant minorities to a segregate, subaltern position.

Hegemony and resistance in the media space

Literature on ethnic minorities and the media identifies two main practices of exclusion in the mainstream media. The first one refers to the politics of representation of migrant and ethnic minorities in the media. Several studies around the globe show they are not reflecting appropriately the increasing diversity of contemporary societies, reporting on ethnic minorities and migrants through biased, criminalising discourses and images (Downing & Husband, 2005; Hargreaves, 2001; Lario, 2008; Santa Ana, 2002; Ter Wal, 2002). On the other hand, biased representation is usually accompanied by what has been coined as 'discursive exclusion'. According to Herzog (2011), 'discursive exclusion' means that those who are excluded are in a position of 'structural irrelevance as people':

This does not mean that the excluded people, as a topic, are not relevant to the rest of society. It simply means that they do not appear to be relevant for the creation of their own public identity, but rather they are mere objects of the pre-existing public identity (Herzog, 2011: 618).

The author stresses that very often this exclusion does not occur due to an explicit prohibition to participate, but rather because of strong structural inequality with respect to actively participating in the production of discourse. This is due to a variety of factors, such as the private property of the media, the unequal access to material resources, or types of discursive practices that favour a kind of language and style that normally pertains to the dominant classes, at the expense of others. In this way, political economy structurally reinforces what culture informally achieves; in such a way that the media tend to reproduce the values of the dominant classes and contribute to maintaining the status quo (Chomsky, 1997).

In reference to the British case, Husband points out that 'it is evident that ethnic minorities are marginalized not only through media images, but through their exclusion from full and equitable participation in media industries' (Husband, 1994: 14). In this regard, a shortage of migrant reporters employed in mainstream media (Commission for Racial Equality, 2005; Ferrández Ferrer, 2012), scarce news sources of migrant origin (Retis, 2012; Santamaría, 2002; Van Dijk, 1991), and poor media attention given to this social group, keeps migrants and their interests, practices, and political vindications left invisible. Research has demonstrated that even when they manage to get a position in mainstream media, it is difficult for them to pursue their

perspective on news stories (Ferrández Ferrer, 2012) and, as Husband (2005) addressed, their ethnicity acquires a painful relevance when it is confronted with their colleagues' ethnocentrism and hostility. In this context, Marchetti (2005: 67) highlights the 'split identity' of minority journalists, who have to deal with the difficult task of negotiating simultaneously an engaged professional identity and their ethnic identity.

Admittedly, discrimination against ethnic minorities goes beyond their media participation, as discursive exclusion and biased representation are frequently just an expression of their social, economic and political subaltern position in society. They have been struggling for their rights throughout the world, using different strategies, and many times occupying the public space with demonstrations and sit-ins. However, in a context of growing mediatisation of society (Hjarvard, 2008), being present in the media acquires relevance as a guarantee of existence, and ethnic minorities are very aware of it. If public space provided by the media is defined as a space for debate and discussion about what is at stake, their exclusion is limiting the possibilities of ethnic minorities to be active agents in the struggle for recognition of citizenship rights. In this context, minorities have been active in developing their own media outlets to counteract both their biased portrayal and their 'discursive exclusion' from mainstream media, at the same time as they push for recognition and citizenship rights in the media public sphere. This way, ethnic minorities cannot be considered as passive recipients for mainstream images and discourses, but as active agents in the production of their own mediated identity.

The constitution of alternative publics through these kind of media outlets has proved to have many advantages for those collectives traditionally left out of the mainstream. Fraser (1990: 67) designates these publics as 'subaltern counterpublics', and perceives them as 'parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups create and circulate counterdiscourses which allow them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs'. As public spheres are not only spaces for the formation of discursive opinion, but also for the creation and enactment of social identities, the emergence of subaltern counterpublics plays a dual role. On the one hand, they act as spaces of retreat and construction, recognition and reinforcement of the identity of the group, and, on the other hand, they function as spaces in which hegemonic discourses from the dominant public sphere are combated (Fraser, 1990: 67-68).

The proliferation of indigenous media⁴ (Ginsburg, 1991; Wilson & Stewart, 2008), alternative and community media (Downing, 2001; Spitulnik, 2002; Vatikiotis, 2005), media produced by and/or for ethnic minorities and migrants (Georgiou, 2006; Retis, 2006; Rigoni, 2003; Suárez & Ferrández Ferrer, 2012) and other groups excluded from hegemonic mediated communication, give clear signs that while in the contemporary media landscape there is a trend to transmit a particular ideology, there is also a possibility of constructing areas from which to emanate attitudes and alternative discourses that give a space of power to their producers and recipients, a framework that opens the doors to thinking of new forms of resistance when faced with hegemonic cultural and political discourse. In this regard, according to Husband the development of media by ethnic and migrant communities would be contributing to the creation of a 'vigorous multi-ethnic public sphere' (2005: 461).

Being produced by and/or for ethnic minorities, these media have been theorised as alternative, 'not only in relation to the mainstream but also in their potential to voice ideas which are important and distinctive in their own right, that are not necessarily counter-hegemonic, but are still of significance for different communities' (Bailey, Cammaerts and Carpentier, 2007: xii). Analysing this type of media, researchers have put the emphasis either on their (oppositional) relation with the mainstream media, or on their role in serving the community.

Regarding the alternative character of ethnic minority media as compared to the mainstream, a thorough analysis of these media compels us to be prudent and not assume uncritically their

counter-hegemonic profile by the fact they are produced by and/or for ethnic minorities. At this point Bourdieu's theory of fields is useful to identify the multiple forces and actors that take part in the universe of journalistic production and consumption, and that nowadays limit the power of journalism to influence the social world in a critical and independent way (see Bourdieu, 1996a, 1996b, 2005). According to Bourdieu (2005), the field of journalism is losing more and more of its independence due to the influence of the fields of economy and politics, which put limits on journalists' autonomy through public and private funding, and competitiveness.⁵ Of course, fields are not static; they are constantly changing, and as the author states, 'transformations of the field matter' (Bourdieu, 2005: 36). In fact, we must understand the public space as an object of perpetual collective reconstruction, and therefore a field for the battle over the imposition of the legitimated version of social reality, including hegemonic discourses on diversity in contemporary societies. The 'democratisation' of media production thanks to the new technologies brought important changes to the media space as informants and discourses got more diverse. In this context ethnic minority media developed throughout the world to give a different view of reality, challenging hegemonic representations of a homogeneous society from a subaltern position, as these media producers and consumers may not be formally recognised as citizens or, even if they are, they may suffer from discrimination due to their ethnic identity.

The influence of external forces is also marked in the ethnic minority media, with the particularity that many times these forces largely surpass the ethnic community. Produced and consumed in host and home countries – together with their producers, advertisers, marketing businesses, journalists and consumers – these media are not confined to the national context but are characterised by the globalisation of their capital, the development of international media outlets, and an interest in disseminating certain economic, cultural and political tendencies at the global scale. In the end, the influence of all these elements will determine their potential to challenge the hegemonic public sphere. As ethnic minority media are not alien to contradictions, ambivalences and tensions that affect the general media field, the extent to which they can be considered alternative or not, would largely depend on the themes and strategies they develop. Therefore, their contents, modes of production, working routines, and discourses, among other issues, must be analysed in depth (Retis, 2006).

Regarding news production, studies have shown that news-making practices and working routines in the media can limit their democratising potential, due to a lack of journalists and a routine that limits their capacity to research and contrast reliable sources (Ferrández Ferrer, 2012; Saitta, 2015). Relying on governmental, judicial or police sources, instead of on minority sources, together with an abusive use of press agency news and press releases (from embassies and consulates; local, regional or national government institutions, and so on), makes it difficult to offer an alternative vision of reality. This limits the role of minority journalists as active participants in the struggle against hegemonic discourses on migration and cultural diversity, and perpetuates the dominance of particular sources as legitimated narrators – constructors – of reality.

Intertwined with newsroom practices and routines is political economy. Works by Shi (2009) and Gómez (2019) show how it can also limit their potential, especially in a time when an economic and financial crisis has made them even more dependent on private funding.⁶ In this context, a tendency to publish soft information and to avoid tough topics, together with self-censorship, have appeared in order to satisfy private backers and to maintain advertising (Ferrández Ferrer, 2014). To counteract this situation, recent research about Hispanic journalists in the United States points to the specific and crucial need to fund and support investigative journalism projects developed by minorities (Retis, 2019). Otherwise, tensions and contradictions flourish. For example, Gómez (2019) highlights contradictions between editorials and the reality of economic viability of these projects, as the journalists' desire to play a social and committed role within the community is frequently put aside due to the need to construct – and sell – a target

audience attractive for advertisers. This commoditisation of ethnic identities leads to the homogenisation of internal differences, putting identity in the service of economic benefit (Dávila, 2001). Sometimes the erasing of internal differences is also a matter of numbers, as small ethnic communities may find it difficult to start their own media outlets, thus being absorbed by other bigger regional or linguistic communities. In these situations media pluralism is subjugated to market imperatives, 'further excluding communities that lack economic, social, and political resources necessary to intervene in the so-called marketplace of ideas' (Budarick, 2018: 2407).

In this regard, Georgiou asks: 'Do alternative and community media challenge hegemonic discourses of ethnic and gender stratification?' (Georgiou, 2012b: 792). This encourages us to analyse the discourses and images present in these media without assuming that entering the media sphere entails an immediate counterhegemonic nature. Ethnic minority media are still media, and as such are not beyond the struggles, negotiations and dynamics that affect both the journalistic and the social field. As Bourdieu states, a certain level of agency in this struggle for power does not mean emancipation from the structure of the field in question. Indeed, alternative practices and discourses do not always look for a deconstruction of the hegemonic principles, but instead, they participate in the struggle for power within a certain 'space of possibles' (Bourdieu, 1996b). Research has shown that ethnic minority media offer a proactive and positive image of migrants and ethnic diversity, as something inherent to contemporary societies and an irreversible process. Work by Echevarría, Ferrández Ferrer and Dallemagne (2015) shows how migrants are depicted as young, hard-working, familiar, responsible and politically active people, very far from the mainstream media representation as criminals or victims. But despite alternative discourses on topics such as citizenship rights and political participation, other issues, such as cultural identity and gender hegemonic representations remain unchallenged. On the contrary, 'issues related to migrants' rights, integration, citizenship, class, ethnicity, gender or global capitalism frequently reproduce dominant regimes of representation coexisting with more alternative discourses' (Echevarría, Ferrández Ferrer and Dallemagne, 2015: 101).

By acknowledging non-counterhegemonic aspects pervading the ethnic minority media we are not denying their potential to struggle against discrimination and cultural oppression. Indeed, as the articles in this special issue demonstrate, media production and participation has become an important strategy adopted by subaltern groups to empower themselves, by creating spaces for both cultural identity reproduction and revitalisation and the expression of needs and concerns, this time speaking by themselves. This is clearly a different conception of 'alternative media', related to the community interests. Considering the public space as an arena for the discussion of public issues and the conformation of public opinion (Habermas, 2001), the emergence of specific media produced by and for ethnic minorities can provide spaces to gather and to articulate their political claims. In fact, ethnic minority media can act as 'spaces of civic involvement' (Mata 2006), as spaces for the creation of citizens' rights and duties, functioning as vehicles for the political mobilisation of migrants (Ferrández Ferrer, 2017), as advocates on behalf of immigrant audiences, and provide spaces for discussion on immigrants and ethnic minorities' needs and concerns (Casillas, 2016; Retis, 2019). In this context, ethnic minority media can be understood as combating hegemony in different ways:

As systems of representation that are complex and rich, they destabilize the dualities of a homogeneous We against a homogeneous Other. As they expand across local, national and transnational spaces, they challenge notions of the public sphere as singular and of the public space as physically contained. And as they provide opportunities for self-representation to groups that often find themselves at the margins of society, they open up the urban and mediated street to be a space for presence, possibly and hopefully a space for democratic participation (Georgiou 2012a: x).

The way minority media combine counteracting hegemonic discourses from the dominant public sphere on the one hand, and creating spaces for recognition and reinforcement of ethnic communities on the other, together with a role as political actors in the media space, gives way to a plethora of media types. In this regard, a critical perspective on ethnic minority media would show the complexity of media production in the contemporary media field and reject simplistic approaches that assume that the production of minority media automatically means a challenge to hegemonic discourses and practices. This complexity is consistent with the idea of media as active agents in negotiations and struggles that take place in the public sphere, as multiple, contradictory, overlapping and changing interests are always part of such negotiations. As Georgiou states,

Ethnic and diasporic media are [...] characterized by paradoxical contradictions: claiming to represent communities; aiming to make a profit; torn by amateurism; promoting long-distance nationalism; celebrating cosmopolitanism or flying the flag of communitarianism. [...] These media reflect a world in itself: rich, powerful, contested, and torn apart by power struggles within and with the hegemonic system of media power (Georgiou 2012a: ix).

The articles of this special issue give some examples of this complexity.

Contents of this Special Issue

When preparing this special issue we wanted to reflect a wide range of ethnic communities, media appropriation practices and local and national contexts, with the aim of presenting an international overview of the empowering potential of ethnic minority media in combating hegemonic discourses, discursive exclusion and social discrimination against minorities throughout the world. The result is a compilation of seven case studies from five countries: three from Latin America – Colombia and Brazil – two from the United States, one from Canada and one from Australia. Starting from a diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives, and analysing a plethora of media appropriation practices that goes from local to transnational contexts, our contributors examine how ethnic and migrant minorities are using the media to counteract a subaltern position in society, which in some cases has existed for centuries.

Ethnic communities here represented include different groups, comprising migrant communities settled in Canada and Brazil, university students of Colombian origin in the US, indigenous population in rural areas of the United States and Colombia, and young refugees in Australia. Also, media appropriation practices by these groups are characterised by their diversity, including production of media addressed to members of a particular ethnic group, participation in a university radio station, creation of campus-based newspapers as a means of political vindication, and appropriation of audio-visual tools to empower an indigenous community in their pursuit of political goals. Finally, research methodologies applied, ranging from the historical analysis of print media to ethnographic techniques, photo-elicitation, and participatory action research, show the necessity to combine multiple research techniques to grasp the complexity of this media field, where ethnicity, community engagement and political vindications intertwine with journalistic practices.

The first three articles deal with indigenous communities' media production, all of them pointing out the specificity of these communities not only as the first peoples inhabiting a land, but also as having collective rights and a legitimate claim to sovereignty and nationhood, after a long history of forced relocation and dispossession. The article by Laura Ximena Triana analyses the appropriation of audiovisual technology by the Wiwa community in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia, including photography and video recording, as a means to preserve and communicate their cultural identity, including the beliefs and traditions linked to the production

and creation of music and musical instruments. Audiovisuals have been used by the Wiwa community also to express their political claims and their concerns about the deterioration of their environment, especially since the construction of a hydroelectric dam which did not only mean the displacement of people and farm lands, but also disrupted the spiritual link between the communities and the territory. As the author stresses, after decades of armed conflict in the region, and the effects of colonial oppression, indigenous communities have started making use of audiovisual tools both to explicitly address their social and political issues on a regional level, and to develop a new cultural space for self-expression and social (re)construction. Also in Colombia, the article by Diego Mauricio Cortés analyses the impact of Colombian State intervention in indigenous radio stations, with specific attention to the cases of Misak and Nasa communities in Cauca. Through an extensive critical review of previous studies, Cortés argues that scholars have paid little attention to the political and economic constraints that indigenous media endure. The author examines the emergence of contradictory legislation toward indigenous radio stations and new challenges to community organising in the implementation of the 'Programa Comunidad', Colombia's first state sponsored program for indigenous radio stations. With his contribution he seeks to demonstrate how this case makes evident that State efforts to promote indigenous radio stations resulted, not in empowering, but in tightening control over these potentially 'problematic' tools for indigenous political organisation.

The third article, by Jana Wilbricht, is based on media developed by rural indigenous communities in the United States. Radio initiatives analysed by the author show that, together with their relevance in strengthening local culture, these media often stand in opposition to hegemonic narratives produced by outsiders about the indigenous population and their concerns. In this regard, indigenous people have been underrepresented not only in the mainstream media, but also within the community media outlets. After a long period of invisibility, in the 1970s indigenous activists became aware of the powerful role the media could play in shaping opinions and in gaining support for their cause from the American public. With this intention they created their own media to make their claims and needs known to the broader public. Nowadays tribal radio continues to be a tool for indigenous resistance and a mouthpiece for activist movements in the US.

The following three articles delve into migrant communities' media outlets in different countries. Harry L. Simón Salazar's analysis extends the perspective to historical analysis of the emergence and significance of the Chicana/o student movement during the 1960s and 1970s and their various forms of print media. The author explores a scarcely documented minority media such as campus-based student publications produced throughout the United States. His contribution seeks to provide an understanding of the role of these media outlets as forms of community media and their role as advocate on behalf of not only Chicana/o students but broader publics. Drawing on a sample of newspapers published between late 1960s and 1980s, Salazar documents their rapid decline primarily as consequence of a global techno-cultural trend within political communication that led to a general decline of print media.

In the next article, Denise Cogo takes a transnational approach in the analysis of counter-hegemonic narratives produced and shared in digital media by Haitian immigrants in Brazil. The author examines how in their narratives, Haitians revisit the historic dynamics and contradictions of a common African root that, in the mark of their migratory processes to Brazil, bring both cultures and nations closer together and further apart at the same time. Cogo argues how in South-South migratory flows, there are also hierarchies reproduced and supported by the idea of race. From a nationality perspective, these narratives question the myth of racial democracy as the foundational narrative of the Brazilian nation, evidencing that race remains a marker of selectivity of migratory policies and a producer of inequalities in different social spaces in Brazil.

Finally, the article by Syeda N. Bukhari focuses on the role played by ethnic media developed

by and for South Asians in Canada in creating knowledge, awareness and civic engagement, as well as providing a platform for political activism among their users. In her work, both resistance to the hegemonic tendencies and contradictions can be found. Ethnic media analysed are contributing to break the systemic barriers for the inclusion of minority voices based on their lack of English language skills, which are present even in the multicultural media outlets. However, at the same time they face criticism by smaller ethnic communities within the South Asian group who do not feel represented by ethnic minority media, which offer them only some time slots with limited options, mainly supporting entertainment programmes, and discouraging debates about political or social issues related to their communities. This way they are subjected to a kind of discursive discrimination which prevents them from challenging either the mainstream media's biased representations or the ethnic media's dominant representation of what being a South Asian in Canada means. Bukhari concludes by pointing out how 'the influence of political ideologies, business advertisers, and bigger ethnic communities dominated the ethnic media resonating with the mainstream media'.

To conclude, the last article, authored by Heather Anderson, Shepard Masocha and Neelu Sharma, point at the specific concerns related to young refugees in Australia, as although they share many of the challenges of other migrant communities, their migration was forced rather than chosen, and some of them arrived in the new country with past experiences of violence, loss and even survival of torture. Furthermore, as Nyers (2006) highlights, without a state to recognise their citizenship rights, refugees lack a political voice, which jeopardizes their status as human beings. Media coverage of refugees and asylum seekers around the world has become increasingly negative. They have been represented as 'unwanted invaders' (Parker 2015), bogus refugees and even social parasites (Kaye, 2001). Also in Australia media coverage of refugees and asylum seekers is biased and criminalising, even when reporting about people arriving in the country as a child. In this context, based on a Participatory Action Research methodology, Heather Anderson, Shepard Masocha and Neelu Sharma show how participating in a media project can help to counteract these hegemonic discourses by acquiring visibility in a context of general absence of voices of refugees in the mainstream media. Participants in The Powerhouse Radio Show gained confidence as having a voice in the public sphere, regardless of their citizenship statuses, at the same time that they acquire important skills necessary to their settlement in the country.

Combined, these seven articles present unique contributions to examine and understand the tensions and contradictions the ethnic minority media deal with in contemporary media space. Being community empowering tools in a context of cultural dominance and political exclusion, but affected by the same economic and political constrictions that affect other media, ethnic minority media seem to be just in the middle of the continuum between hegemony and resistance.

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Notes

- 1 Fearon (2003) found that only 18 per cent of all countries in the world have a single ethnic group accounting for 90 per cent or more of the population. About 70 per cent of all countries have an ethnic group that forms an absolute majority of the population (an average of 65% of the population). The average size of the second-largest group is 17 per cent.
- 2 The 1951 *United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* adopted in Geneva defines a refugee as a person who 'owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it' (United Nations, 1951, Article 1.A.2).
- 3 'Vox pide la expulsión de 52.000 inmigrantes ilegales en Andalucía para investir a Juanma Moreno', available at: <https://okdiario.com/espana/vox-exige-expulsion-52-000-inmigrantes-ilegales-andalucia-investir-juanma-moreno-3553067>.

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- 4 The term 'indigenous media' was coined by Faye Ginsburg (1991) in order to designate the various activities related to the media that are carried out by people belonging to indigenous minorities, particularly those who recognise themselves as 'First Nations' or 'People of the Fourth World' dominated by surrounding states.
 - 5 'One of the paradoxes is that competition, which is always said to be the precondition of freedom, has the effect, in fields of cultural production under commercial control, of producing uniformity, censorship and even conservatism' (Bourdieu, 2005: 44).
 - 6 Some authors also stress the evolution of the migrant community through the years as an important element to consider in the possible disappearance of ethnic media in the host countries. For example, in Spain Gómez (2019) shows how marketing agencies stopped addressing migrants as a different target of consumers after the second generation grew up with experiences, necessities and interests different from those of their parents, including the necessity of being informed about the home country's political, economic or social situation, the sending of remittances to the home country, or the necessity to telephone relatives there.